



CHAPTER 2 - THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES IN DANIEL



To understand more about the 'Times of the Gentiles' we must go to the prophet Daniel, who was the key prophet at the time when the Times of the Gentiles. In fact he was in the first group to go into captivity to Babylon in Tishri 607 BC (at the start of the 3rd year of King Jehoiakim, see Daniel 1:1) giving us the first starting date for these Times of Gentile Dominion. The whole subject of the Book of Daniel is these 'Times of the Gentiles', whose start he witnessed. His anointing was to prophetically reveal the course of these Times describing the nature of the Gentile-kingdoms that would rule over Israel, until finally God's eternal Kingdom is established, thereby proving God's Sovereignty over all.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a great image, which Daniel interpreted. This was a prophetic summary of 'the Times of the Gentiles' (of Gentile political dominion over Israel), revealing the four main Gentile kingdoms that would dominate Israel (first Babylon, then Persia, Greece, and Rome). Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon is described as the first, the beginning and head of these Gentile-Powers that take different forms over the centuries, but are collectively called 'Babylon'. Ultimately he sees them destroyed, and replaced by the coming of a great Stone which fills the earth (Jesus Christ and His Kingdom).

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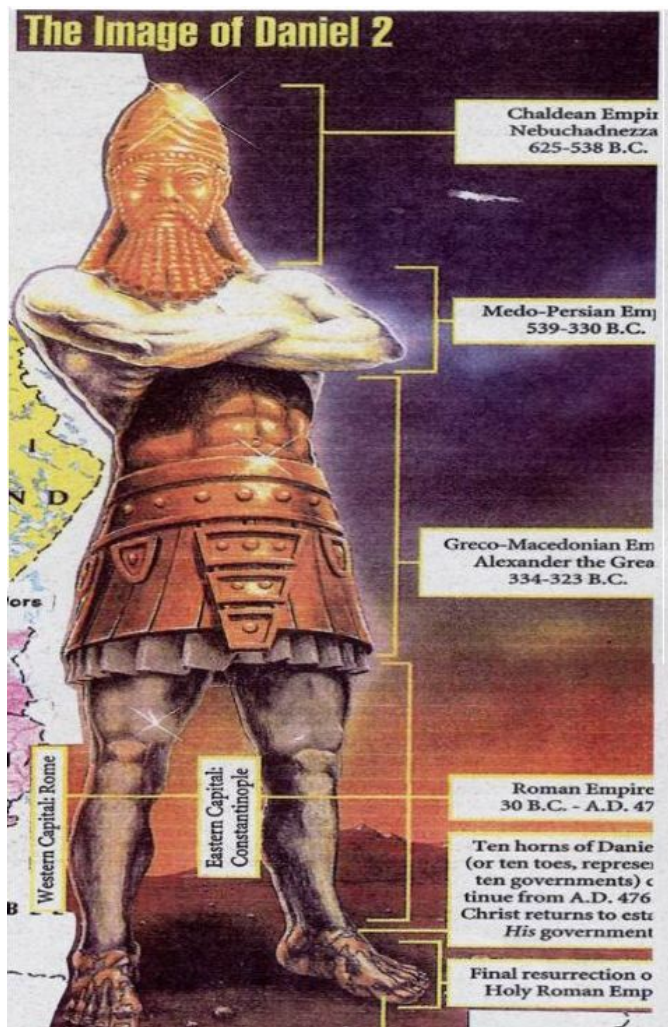
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Daniel 4: The SEVEN TIMES of Daniel 4.

This whole chapter is a tract written by Nebuchadnezzar for everyone to read (v1) telling of his conversion to the God of Israel (v37). It concerns a second dream which Daniel interpreted. This dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerned himself, but as the first ruler of 'Babylon' for the Times of the Gentiles, he also represents the whole Gentile rule of these Times. He is thus a type (picture) of the Gentile-powers as a whole that would follow him. Thus the dream revealed much about these Times of the Gentiles: their nature, outcome and duration.

This dream revealed a great tree which was cut down for a period of SEVEN TIMES (v16,25) as a judgement, but would be restored afterwards.

The Vision (v10-17). "I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it...and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth.

Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let SEVEN TIMES pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men."

Daniel's Interpretation (v20-26): "The tree that you saw...

- it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till SEVEN TIMES pass over him'; this is the interpretation, O king ... They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field... They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and SEVEN TIMES shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

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Sundays at 11am and 6pm
Cheney School Hall
Cheney Lane - Headington
Oxford - England - UK
OX3 7QH

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"And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules."

The Fulfilment with Nebuchadnezzar (v28-37). "All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of 12 months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?" While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven:

"King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and SEVEN TIMES shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

At the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth... At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honour and splendour returned to me... I was restored to my kingdom and excellent majesty."

The vision concerns a Tree, representing a King and Kingdom cut down in judgement because of its pride - for a period of 7 TIMES, yet afterwards restored. The interpretation applies this first to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who had become proud, refusing to acknowledge God. Therefore he was going to be cut down to size, becoming mad and living as a beast (but still being the king), for a period of 7 TIMES, at the end of which he would realise that the Most High rules over men and so would be restored.

Thus it was fulfilled first in Nebuchadnezzar. The king did not heed the vision, but it came to pass (v28-33). He indeed became insane for a period of 7 TIMES (a TIME was an ancient Babylonian Year of 360 days), after which he realised God rules, and so was restored (v34-37), resulting in him preaching faith in the true God to his whole kingdom (see also 5:18-21).

But God is revealing something deeper here, for as the first Gentile ruler, King Nebuchadnezzar also represents Babylon and the Gentile Empires of Daniel 2 (being the head of gold in v38). In prophetic symbolism, he stands for the Gentile powers of the whole of 'the Times of the Gentiles.' He is a Type of the whole dominion of Gentile powers, and his personal 7-Times are a Type of whole of 'the Times of the Gentiles'. Thus through the pictures of the dream, God was revealing something about the nature, outcome and duration of this long period of Gentile-dominion.

1. As to its nature: It is a period of Gentile dominion and madness over Israel, where the Gentile ruling-powers of Babylon (like Nebuchadnezzar) have the nature (heart) of a beast and rule like a beast - with pride and cruelty, without acknowledging God's authority over them, and thus lacking soundness of mind. Indeed Gentile powers are often pictured as Beasts (e.g. in Daniel 7).

However they are ultimately restrained under the hand of God, who determines the boundaries and conditions of the Times, even declaring them ahead of time. The Times of the Gentiles are therefore under the Sovereignty of God.

Moreover during these Times, the Gentiles will receive 'the dew of heaven.' This was prophetic of the spiritual blessings in the Holy-Spirit poured out upon all flesh at Pentecost AD 33 through Christ.

2. As to its outcome: At the end of these Times, the Gentile nations (like King Nebuchadnezzar) will be restored to a right mind of submission to the rule of God (in the Millennium), when they will accept God's right to set as ruler over the kingdoms of the earth:
"the lowest (humblest, most abased) of men (Jesus Christ)."

3. As to its duration, the typology of Nebuchadnezzar indicates that this time-period of Gentile dominion and madness over Israel is to be measured as 7 TIMES. As Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon was described as the first and head of these Gentile powers who were given dominion over Israel and Jerusalem (Daniel 2), he represented the whole Gentile dominion of the Times of the Gentiles. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that his personal 7 TIMES acting as a BEAST due to his pride, also represented and symbolised something on a larger scale - namely the whole period of Gentile Dominion over Israel, especially when we consider that Daniel later describes the Gentile Kingdoms over this time as BEASTS (Daniel 7). Thus Nebuchadnezzar, the head, was a type of the Gentile Dominion as a whole. Now God specifically spells out the length of this beastly insanity as 7 TIMES, which leads us to expect that this is also a measure of the total length of the Times of the Gentiles. So in other words, this is a coded prophecy that:
the TIMES of the Gentiles is a period of 7 TIMES.

We have seen that it was given to Daniel, who was taken into captivity to Babylon at the start of the Times of the Gentiles, to describe the course of these Times of Gentile Dominion over Israel. In Daniel 4, we are given a clue as to how long this Time Period will be, for it is typologically described as being 7 TIMES. This indicates that the TIMES of the Gentiles consist of 7 TIMES.

A TIME was a Babylonian Year of 360 days,
Therefore 7 TIMES = 7 x 360 = 2,520 days.

This is confirmed by comparing the following verses which all describe the same period of time: the Great Tribulation:

In Daniel 9:27, the Great Tribulation starts in 'the Midst of the Week (of 7 years)' and runs until the end of these 7 years, therefore it lasts for 3.5 years.

According to Daniel 7:25,12:7, Revelation 12:14, it lasts: 'a Time, Times and half a Time' (3.5 Times);

According to Revelation 12:6, it lasts '1,260 days'

According to Revelation 11:2, 13:5, it lasts '42 months.'

Thus 42 months = 1260 days = 3.5 Times = Half of 7 Years.

Therefore 1 month has 30 days and
1 Time (12 months) is 30x12 = 360 days.

'A Time (360), Times (720) and half a Time (180)' is 1260 days.
(that is 3.5 Times = 3.5 x 360 days = 1260 days)
and 7 TIMES = 2,520 days.

Thus a Time is a special year of 360 days. It is not the year the Bible generally uses, neither is it a 'prophetic year', but it is used by God for only one special use: for times of world-wide judgement. Thus it is only used for the 7 years of the Tribulation and for the year of Noah's Flood (Genesis 7:11,24; 8:3,4). The reason why the Times of the Gentiles are 7 x 360 years is that they are based on the blueprint of the 7 x 360 days of the first and last kings of 'Babylon' (Nebuchadnezzar and Antichrist). Thus this period of Gentile (Babylonian) domination is made to carry the imprint both of Babylon and of God's judgement, through the length of time God allotted to it.

This picture in Daniel 2, of God's restraining judgement over the Gentile Tree (Kingdom) mirrors His judgement upon Israel during the very same 7-Times. For Israel was also cut down to size (judged) as a Tree (Nation) for her idolatry. God judged her by putting her under Gentile-domination for 7 Times (the bands of iron and bronze encircling the Tree emphasised Roman and Greek control), yet kept alive. She too entered into a state of mental confusion and blindness (not perceiving her Messiah), but at the end of the 7 Times she too will be restored to faith in Christ, and to a place of dominion. Thus the time of Israel's cutting down would be 7 Times.

Leviticus 26:18,21,24,28 warns Israel that if they continue in sin, they would be punished SEVEN TIMES for their sin, which included Gentile domination and captivity, after which they will be restored (v18-45).

"If you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you SEVEN TIMES for your sins" (v27,28).

So this is also a prophecy that the TIMES of the Gentiles would be a period of 7 TIMES.

Thus 'the Times of the Gentiles' (when Israel and Jerusalem are placed under Gentile domination) described by Jesus in Luke 21:24 are precisely the 7 Times of Daniel 4 and Leviticus 26.

They refer to a definite time-period of parallel Divine discipline upon both the Gentile-Kingdoms (Daniel 4:16,23,25,32) and upon Israel (Leviticus 26:27,28).

The phrase: 'The Times of the Gentiles' leads us to ask: "How many Times are the Time of the Gentiles?" Daniel, the prophet of these Times, as well as Moses, tells us that there are '7 Times of the Gentiles.' So in full it is: "The 7 Times of the Gentiles."

So how long should these 7 Times of Gentile dominion over Israel and Jerusalem be? And when do they finish?

*The YEAR-DAY principle.

To interpret the typology historically we must use the YEAR-DAY principle which often God uses in connection with periods of judgement (see Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 where the sin or judgement of a nation in YEARS corresponds to the experience in DAYS of representative men). Thus the 7 Times of 360 days represent 7 Times of 360 years = 2520 years.

The Times of the Gentiles are therefore 7 Times of Gentile dominion and madness over Israel and her land (that came as a result of Israel's sin) after which the Gentile nations would be restored to a place of faith under the rule of God.

The SEVEN TIMES of the Gentiles are 2520 years!

Daniel 5: This period of 7 TIMES is confirmed in Daniel 5.

This chapter marks the fall of Babylon and the rise of Medo-Persia as the new world-power (538 BC). Belshazzar was the eldest son of the last Babylonian King Nabonidus, who was on a ten-year absence from Babylon. His pride and defiance of God are seen in verses 1-4, 22 and 23, but when God wrote on the wall (v5) he was scared! (v6). God used this occasion to end the Babylonian phase of these Times. The supernatural writing on the wall said:

"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsim."



Daniel's interpretation of it was that God had weighed the kingdom and found it wanting, so accordingly He had numbered its days and now it had finished its time and it would now be divided and given to the Medes and Persians. But Babylon represents all the Gentile-powers and these words also contain God's numbering for the days of Babylon (the Times of the Gentiles) for they are also numerical measures of weight: "A mina, a mina, a shekel and half-a-mina."

In terms of the basic unit (the Gerah):

a Mina = 1000 Gerahs, a shekel = 20 Gerahs.

So, A Mina = 1000

A Mina = 1000

A Shekel = 20

Half-a-Mina = 500

gives a total of 2,520 = 7 TIMES!

This confirms that God has numbered the days of the domination of Israel by Gentile 'Babylon' at 2520 years.

Believing that Babylon was impregnable, Belshazzar was careless but that very night Cyrus opened the city gates by stopping the flow of the river which held the gates closed, just as Isaiah had prophesied 150 years before: "Thus says the Lord to His anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him and loose the armour of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut" (Isaiah 45:1).

To summarise, the Seven Times give the Time-Span of 'the Times of the Gentiles', which are defined by Jesus as the period in which (by God's judgement) Jerusalem is under Gentile domination:

"Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the Times of the

Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). They are Times of Divine discipline upon Israel. Due to her sin, Israel was put under Gentile Dominion for a certain period of time. However God has not finished with Israel, but according to His promises He must restore her to the Land again and fulfil all His Covenants to her and He will also judge the Gentile nations that have mistreated her.

In fact we have had the privilege to see the beginning of the end of the Times of the Gentiles in the Rebirth of Israel in 1948, giving her political dominion and self-rule in her own land again for the first time in over 2,500 years. Then 19 years later in 1967, Israel recaptured the Old-City of Jerusalem which re-established her dominion over Jerusalem, marking the final end of the Times of the Gentiles, according to Jesus' own definition in Luke 21:24.

We have seen from Daniel that God measured these Times of Gentile Dominion as 7 Times of 360 years, or 2,520 years. God appointed and measured out to proud Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the Gentiles kingdoms, an exact time-period which he had to fulfil, of 7 Times ($7 \times 360 = 2520$ days) in which he would rule as a beast. This was symbolic of 7 Times ($7 \times 360 = 2,520$ years) of dominion of Gentile kingdoms (described as beasts) over Israel, that were permitted by God as a discipline upon Israel because of her sin.

The 7 Times started with the Babylonian Captivity in Daniel's time, so God used Daniel to mark the start of this period and to prophesy what would happen in it from start to end. At the end of these Times, God must restore the control of Jerusalem to Israel. This has now been fulfilled in 1948 and 1967 as a clear Biblical sign that these Times have ended and that we are now in the end-times.

Therefore, now the right of Gentiles over Israel and Jerusalem has been removed by God, and so any Gentile attempts to take or divide the land will only result in failure and judgement!